

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-09

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AEC-05 FEAE-00 OES-03 IO-10 ACDA-05 MC-01 CU-02 INT-05

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, MP, IN

SUBJ: VISIT OF MAURITIUS PRIME MINISTER TO INDIA

SUMMARY: THE VISIT OF MAURITIUS PRIME MINISTER RAMGOOLAM RESULTED IN ROUTINE POLLITICAL TALKS WITH MRS. GANDHI AND AGREEMENTS ON ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE. RAMGOOLAM GAVE WARM SUPPORT TO GOI FOREIGN POLICY GOALS, ESPECIALLY TOWARDS DIEGO GARCIA AND THE SHARING OF NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY. INDIA AGREED TO EXTEND CREDITS AND ASSISTANCE TO MAURITIUS TOTALLING RS. 175 MILLION (\$22 MILLION).
END SUMMARY.

1. THE MARUITIUS PRIME MINISTER, DR. SEEWOOSAGAR RAMGOOLAM, VISITED HERE FROM JANUARY 5 THROUGH JANUARY 14. IN A JOINT COMMUNIQUE RELEASED AT THE END OF THE VISIT, RAMGOOLAM STRONGLY SUPPORTED INDIAN FOREIGN POLICY GOALS, NOTABLY TOWARD KEEPING THE INDIAN OCEAN FREE OF BIG POWER RIVALRIES, AND
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DEPLORED THE EXPANSION OF FOREIGN MILITARYBASES ON DIEGO GARCIA.

BOTH PRIME MINISTERS STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF HARNESSING NUCLEAR POWER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND ASSURING THAT THE BENEFITS OF NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY DO NOT REMAIN CONFINED TO A FEW COUNTRIES. THE COMMUNIQUE CALLED FOR UNIVERSAL DISARMAMENT, A BAN ON THE USE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND THE DISTRUCTION OF ALL NUCLEAR WEAPONS' STOCKPILE.

2. THE GOI TOOK STEPS TO FURTHER ITS CULTURAL TIES WITH MAURITIUS, BY SIGNING A CULTURAL EXCHANGE PROGRAM. UNDER THE AGREEMENT, INDIA WILL CONTRIBUTE RS. 7.5 MILLION FOR THE MAHATMA GANDHI CULTURAL INSTITUTE WHICH IS NOW BEING SET UP IN MAURITIUS. THE CULTURAL CENTER IS DESIGNED TO TEACH INDIAN LANGUAGES, CULTURE, AND HISTORY. THE AGREEMENT ALSO INCLUDES SCHOLARSHIPS FOR STUDY AT INDIAN UNIVERSITIES AND EXCHANGES OF ARTISTS AND INTELLECTUALS.

3. RAMGOOLAM BROUGHT HOME TANGIBLE BENEFITS FROM THE VISIT. INDIA AND MAURITIUS SIGNED AN AGREEMENT, WHICH COMMITS INDIA TO EXTEND A RS. 50 MILLION (\$6 MILLION) LOAN TO MAURITIUS. THE LOAN WILL CARRY 5 PERCENT INTEREST, AND WILL BE REPAYABLE IN 12 YEARS AFTER A THREE YEAR GRACE PERIOD. THE LOAN WILL BE USED FOR PROJECTS JOINTLY SELECTED BY THE TWO COUNTRIES.

4. JOINT PROJECTS ALREADY UNDERWAY, LARGELY INVOLVING COLLABORATION WITH INDIAN PRIVATE SECTOR FIRMS, INCLUDE A HOTEL, A CEMENT PLANT, A STEEL ROLLING MILL, A TEXTILE MILL, AND A RUBBER FACTORY. PART OF THE NEW LOAN WILL BE USED TO EXPAND AND MODERNIZE THE STEEL ROLLING PLANTS, WHICH LARGELY SUPPLIED BY INDIA STEEL, IS SMALL. THE CEMENT PLANT IS DESIGNED SOLELY FOR INTERNAL NEEDS OF MAURITIUS AND THERE IS SERIOUS DOUBT WHETHER THIS PROJECT WILL GET OUT OF THE PLANNING STAGE. THE TEXTILE MILL WILL PRODUCE WEAVING AND PRINTING EQUIPMENT BOTH FOR LOCAL CONSUMPTION AND FOR EXPORT TO THE MALAGASY REPUBLIC AND TO EAST AFRICA.

5. INDIA ALSO OFFERED A RS. 100 MILLION COMMERCIAL CREDIT TO MAURITIUS. THE CREDIT WILL LARGELY BE USED FOR THE PURCHASE OF TRANSPORT EQUIPMENT, HEAVY ENGINEERING GOODS, AND POWER GENERATING EQUIPMENT. A TEAM OF GEOLOGISTS FROM THE GOI OIL AND NATURAL GAS COMMISSION WILL BE SENT TO MAURITIUS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TO STUDY PROSPECTS FOR OFFSHORE AND ON MMQWDSA EXPLORATION THE GOI IS PREPARED TO EXTEND N ADDITIONAL RS. 20 MILLION IN TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, BUT SUITABLE PORJECTS HAVE NOT YET BEEN AGREED UPON.

6. COMMENT: RAMGOOLAM'S VISIT HAD MORE CONCRETE RESULTS THAN HAS BEEN THE CASE FOR MOST TRIPS HERE BY AFRICAN LEADERS. THE GOI MAKES A SPECIAL EFFORT TO CULTIVATE MAURITIUS BECAUSE OF

THE LARGE INDIAN POPULATION ON THE ISLAND AND THE GOM'S
SUPPORT FOR INDIAN FOREIGN POLICY POSTIONS.
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